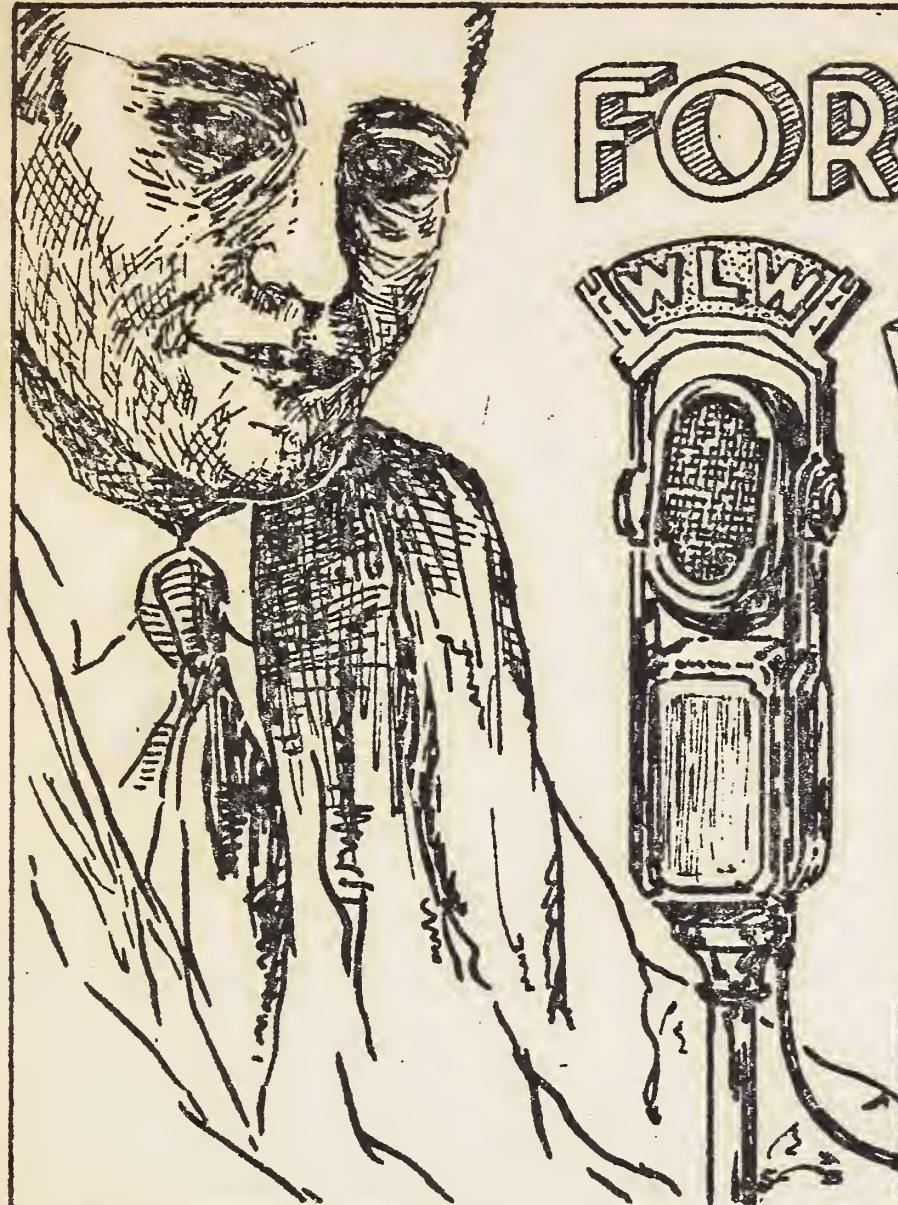


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FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

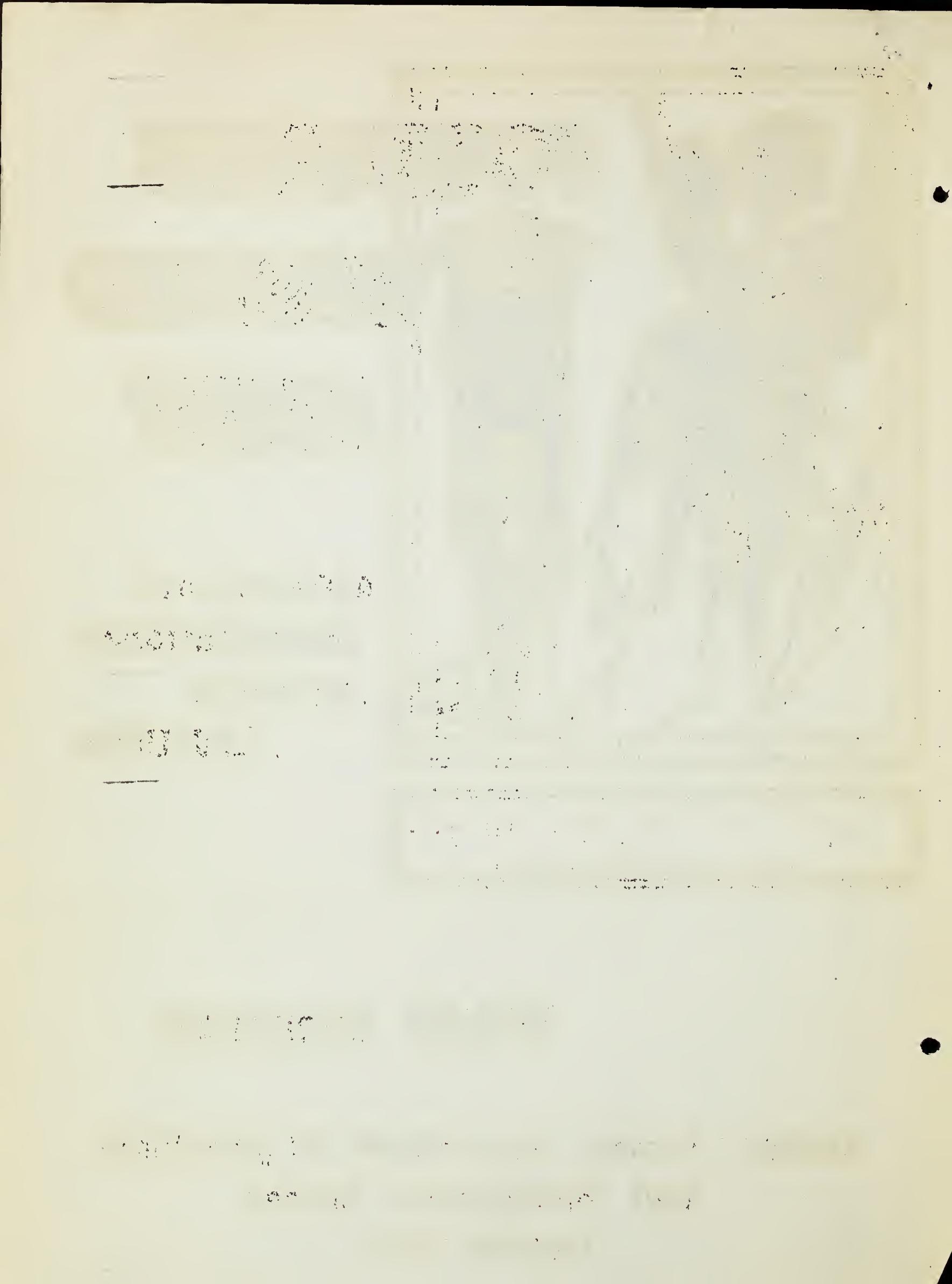
A Series of
Dramatizations
of Better
Land Use

No. 122 August 24, 1940 1:15 p.m.

"THE EVANGELINE COUNTRY"

W·L·W CINCINNATI

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Dayton · Ohio



SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

Beautiful Kisatchie Wold is a great range of hills extending half-way across the center of Louisiana, with bold and rocky ledges, clear running streams, rapids and little waterfalls. In the heart of this picturesque area lies Rapides Parish--an agricultural paradise with a year-round growing season. Beautiful county, this land around Rapides Parish--down in the land of Saint Martin, La Salle, Acadia, Evangeline...

ORGAN: Sneak in soft background....

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

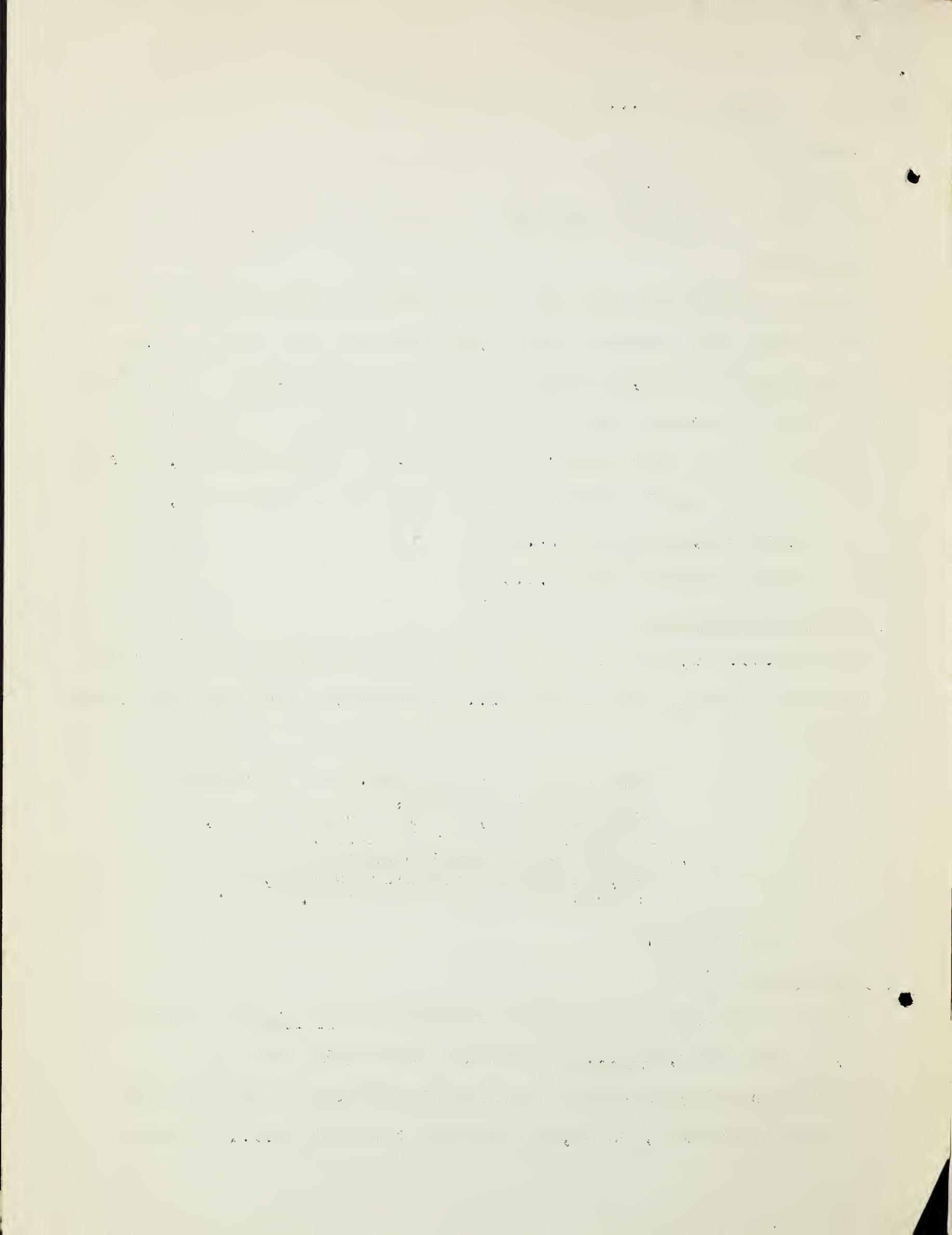
Evangeline....yes, this is the land of Evangeline, a legend that became a part of America folklore...Evangeline, who came from land where

"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring
pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green,
indistinct in the twilight....
...The deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate,
answers the wail of the forest."

ORGAN: Fade out softly.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

This is the story of two plucky youngsters who didn't know how to farm, but know how, now...and they are farming land in the Evangeline country that no one else would have. They are James Brodnax and his wife, Betty, and this is their story....(fade)



BETTY (softly)

What are we going to do, James?

BRODNAX

I don't know. Doesn't look like there'll be another job for a week, anyhow.

BETTY

The grocer asked me about the bill again today. He's been nice, but....

BRODNAX

He's been swell. We couldn't ask for more patience. I don't know what to do, Betty...this thing of jumping from job to job isn't getting us anywhere. The kid needs his three squares a day, too....

BETTY (more spirited)

Oh, he's not missing out! I caught him today just when he was about to bop one of the Snider boys.

BRODNAX (slowly)

Betty...what do you think about getting a farm? What I mean is... well, I've been thinking about it for a long time, and I just....

BETTY

Why, James!

BRODNAX

You don't like the idea, huh? Don't think we can make it?

BETTY

Why, James! I was born on a farm.

BRODNAX

You mean...you'd like it?

BETTY

Why....yes. I've been raised in town, just like you have, and just like you say, we're not getting anywhere. Do you think you could learn to farm?

BRODNAX

No doubt about it. Naturally, I'll make plenty of mistakes. But if it takes elbow grease, I'll learn how. That is, if you'll help me.

BETTY

You know I'll help you. I never have run one of those rake-bucks, or buck-rakes, or whatever you call 'em...

BRODNAX (laughing)

Hay bucks! (PAUSE) Or is it hay rakes? Anyhow, you don't know any more about farming than I do.

BETTY

Of course not, and I don't know any less than you do. I'll bet you never even mowed a silo!

BRODNAX

This has gone far enough. You don't mow a silo. You clip it with a clipper. No, Betty, the more I think about farming, the more I want to try it. After all, we're in the Evangeline country. You know why the Acadians were moved out, don't you?

BETTY

I do know that much. It was a fight between the English and the French in Nova Scotia. The English just didn't like to see such fertile lands in other hands, so they moved the Acadians out.

BRODNAX

And Evangeline, and Basil the Blacksmith, and his son Gabriel went to Louisiana, where Basil told them....

ORGAN: Sneak in softly...

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

"Smoothly the plowshare runs through the soil,
as a keel through the water;
All year long round the orange-groves are in blossom;
and grass grows more in a single night than in
a whole Canadian summer...
Here too, lands may be had for the asking..."

ORGAN: Fade out softly...

BRODNAX (quietly)

Here too...lands may be had for the asking.

ORGAN: HORROR CHORD.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

Here, too...lands may be had for the asking. But what when the
lands are gone...when we reach the last frontier?

ORGAN: HORROR CHORD.

SOUND: Man chopping tree...

BRODNAX

I don't know...which is the toughest....gum...or pine...!

BETTY

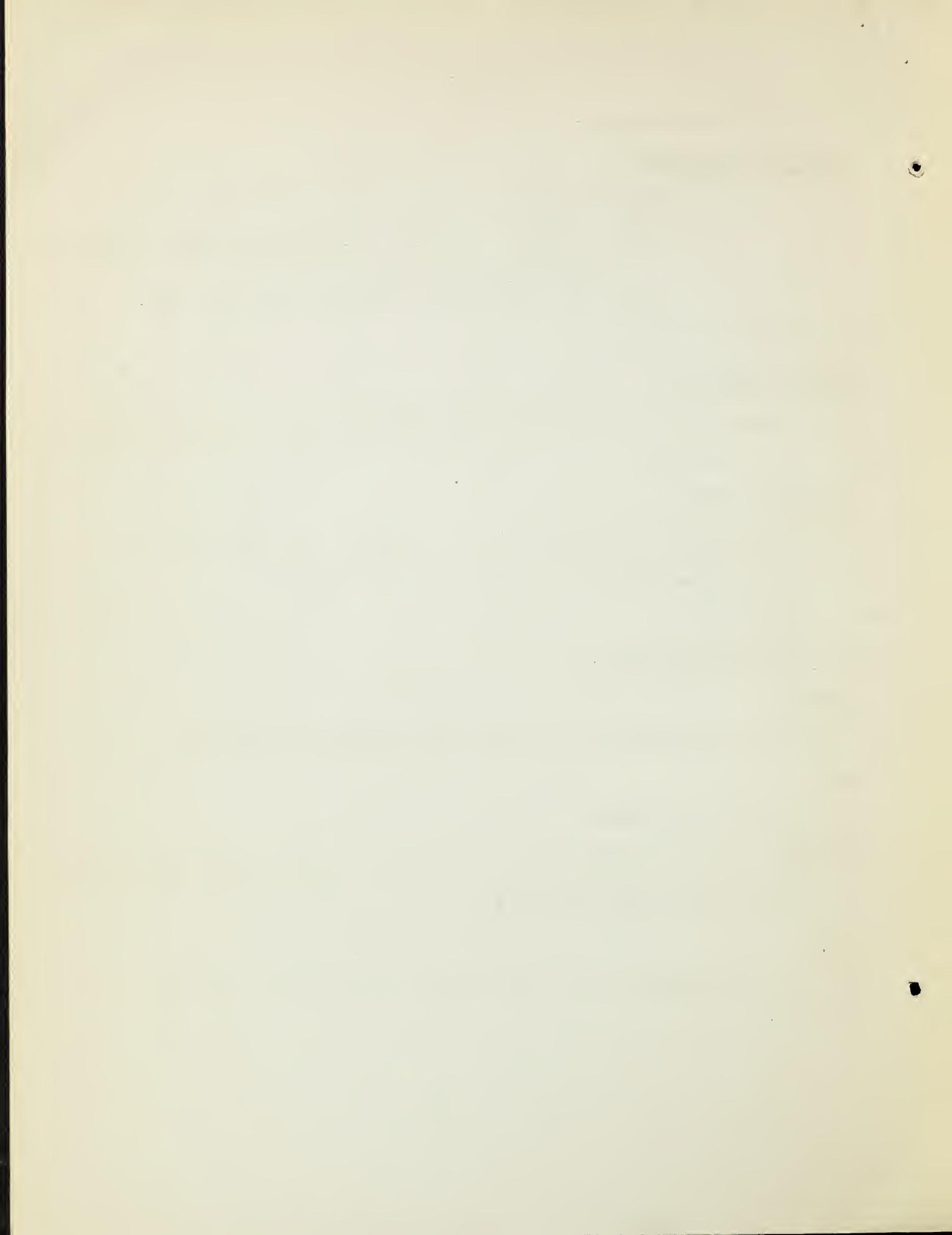
Let me help you, James.

BRODNAX

Oh, you've done enough already.

BETTY

But we've just got to get these trees out of the way to make
pasture.



BRODNAX

You're right there. No wonder Mrs. Wise couldn't get a tenant on the place. All of the land that's been cleared is washed down to clay. Just think, Betty...here's a farm that's been in one family for not more than 50 years....and it's been ruined. A fortune washed away. Corn, potatoes, cotton, ranging the cattle in the woods--that's what did it.

BETTY

And it's up to us to build it back up. It'll take work, James... but I've been reading one of those bulletins Mr. Roark gave us... and it...

BRODNAX

And it'll take mistakes. One of the biggest mistakes we made was not going to the county agent in the first place. For instance, well...you remember when he was out here the other day, and showed us those rows running up and down hill...

BETTY

...and how they caused gullies. Why did people start running rows up and down hill, anyhow?

BRODNAX

I don't know. Just custom, I guess. They liked to take pride in their straight rows.

BETTY

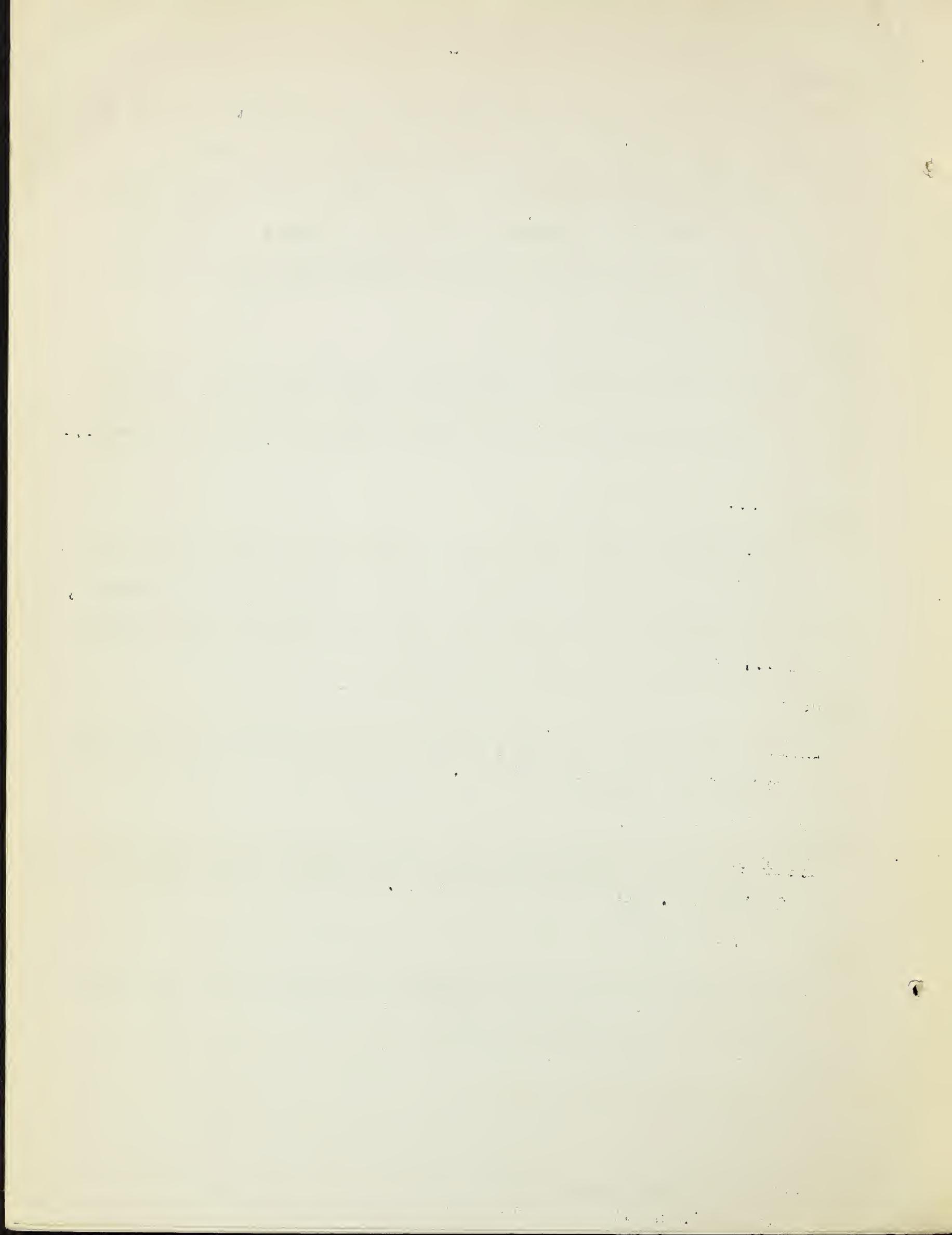
Nobody'd ever be proud of those gullies. I'm glad we're away from the highway, so nobody can see them.

BRODNAX

(LAUGHS VERY LOUD.)

BETTY

Now what's so funny about that?



BRODNAX

I wasn't laughing at you, Betty. I was just thinking about how this farm is so eroded, and then about that article that came out in the Alexandria Town Talk anniversary edition...

BETTY

I didn't see it.

BRODNAX

I've got the clipping right here. That is, if the sweat hasn't ruined it.

BETTY

Well, read it to me.

BRODNAX

Here it is. I clipped it out. It sure is a beaut.

BETTY

Go on and read it.

BRODNAX

All right, here goes. "Centuries from now the lands of Rapides Parish will flash in the summertime with a coral glory of endless leagues of cotton blooms, and the winds of the autumn will cease dallying with the crimson and gold of the forest leafage to wander over the orchards and fields to kiss the rosy cheeks of ripening fruits and nod the golden heads of waving grain and emerald leaves of sugar cane." Pretty, huh?

BETTY (snorting)

Pretty, yes! Now get on with your chopping, or give me that axe!

SOUND: Axe chopping, fading out....

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

"Spreading between these streams are the wondrous,
beautiful prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and
sunshine...
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline
heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above..."

ORGAN: Very softly, fading in and out behind following...

BETTY

The Acadians were industrious. We can be the same.

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

But they made the rich land yield, yield, twenty to one.

MONTAGE

BETTY

Then we can, too.

BRODNAX

We'll build terraces.

BETTY

I'll run the level.

BRODNAX

I'll use the slip grader.

BETTY

I'll hold the plow.

BRODNAX

I'll get the mules....

BETTY

I'll get the clover seed...

BRODNAX

Bur clover, Persian clover...

BETTY

Build terraces.

BRODNAX

Winter cover crops...

BETTY

Cut out row crops...

END MONTAGE.

BRODNAX (deliberately)

The soil has been washed from this farm, Betty. Not all of it, but most of it. Row crop farming did it. Here's where we start a new chapter--we're going in for conservation farming. Are you with me?

BETTY

What do you think, James?

BRODNAX

I know, Betty. I've got 80 acres cut out of the piney woods, mother and dad will come out to help us. We're a couple of city kids that want to build a farm. And don't you think we're doing it?

BETTY

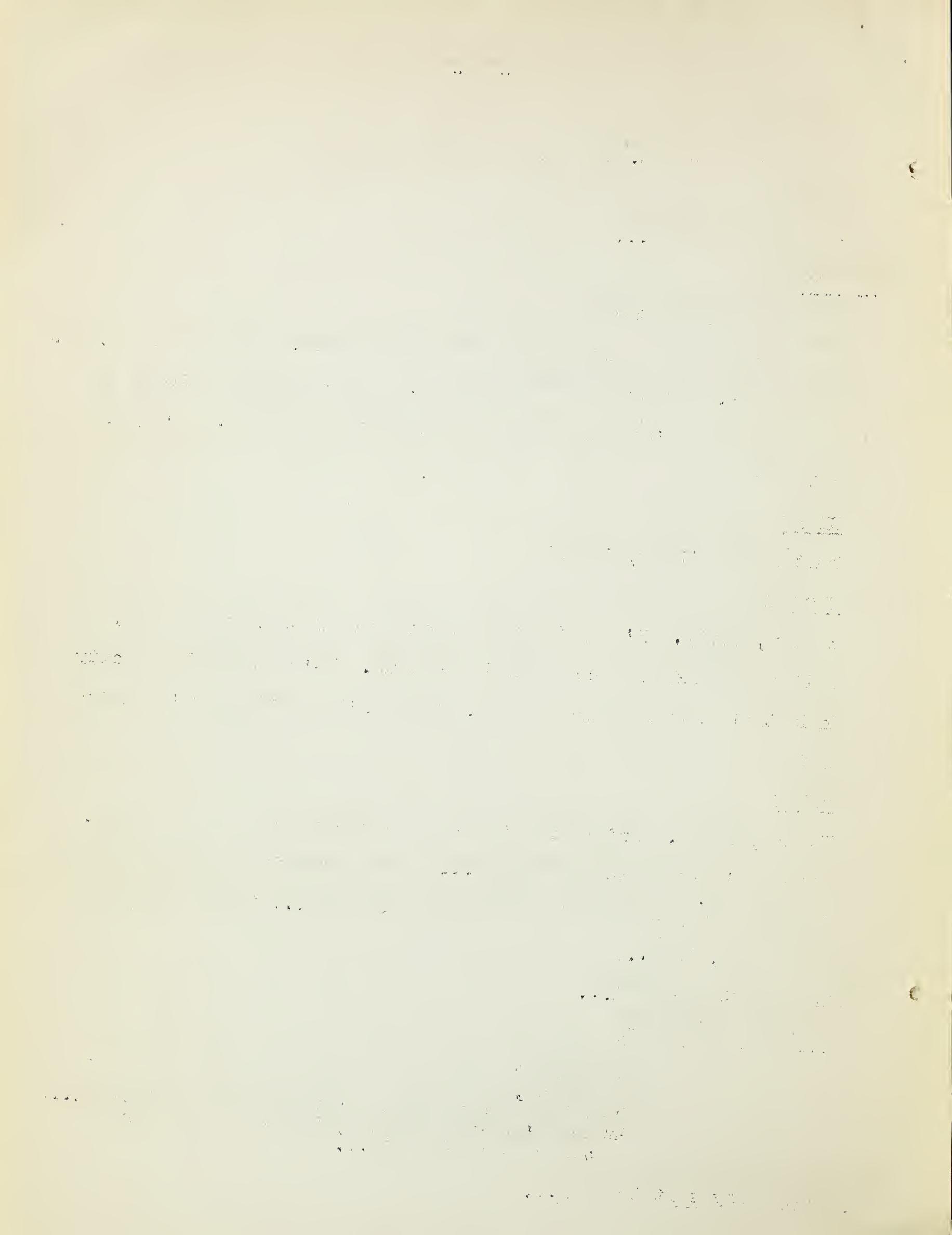
We are, James. And I like the idea of taking care of the land. Maybe it's that pioneer spirit...the same spirit that the Acadians had when they settled the Evangeline country...it must have been beautiful, then...

ORGAN: Softly behind...

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

Past the Ohio shore, and past the mouth of the
Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad Mississippi...
Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness
sombre with forests...

SOUND: Very soft tom tom...



VOICE

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

Cotton trees nodded their shadowy crests...

SOUND: Tom tom...

VOICE OF LONGFELLOW

China trees shaded the landscape, the towering
boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch with the trailing mosses
Of banners that hung on the walls of ancient
cathedrals...

BRODNAX

Yes, Betty, it must have been beautiful, then. But, all land is beautiful in a sense. This soil here beneath our feet may be just plain, common dirt, but it represents hundreds and hundreds of years of work by mother nature. It represents our life. America must keep her soil, for those who are yet to come long after you and I have gone our way.

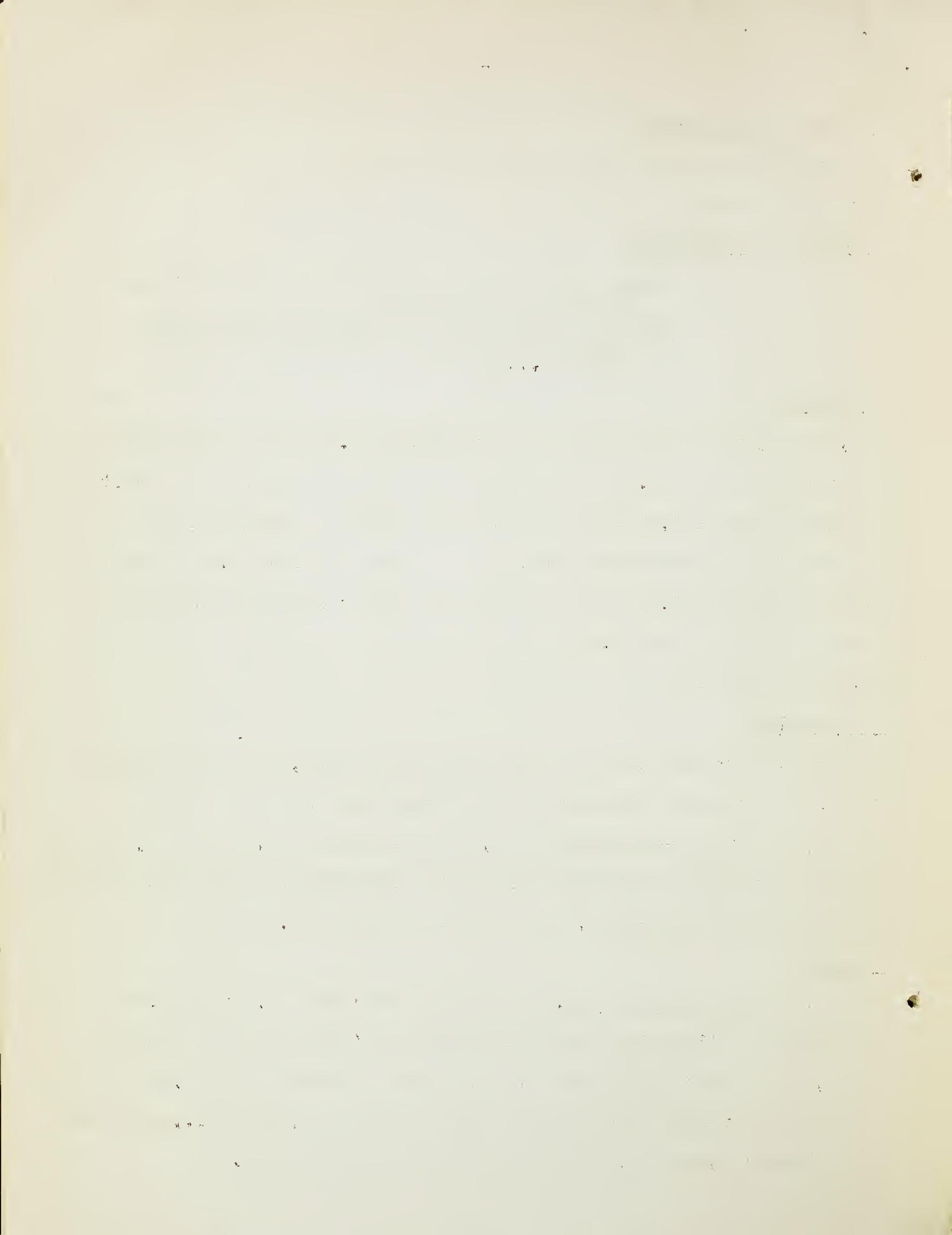
ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of James and Betty Brodnax, a young couple who are gradually building up an eroded hill farm in Rapides Parish, Louisiana--building it up, and making it pay. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, _____ . You have to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Brodnax to really get their philosophy of life, but in a general sense, it just boils down to plain, old-fashioned hard work. He didn't have much to work with when he started out, either... a team of small mules, a turning plow, and a road slip grader.



ANNOUNCER

I imagine his first years have been full of experience.

JONES

Experience...and hard work. After he'd planted his forst crop, a heavy rain came and washed several gullies and ditches right across his field. But within the next two years he terraced the entire farm...16 good, solid, broad terraces. Mrs. Brodnax helped lay them out, even helped plow them. Then he started out on a pasture-improvement program. The only land he had for pasture was seven acres in an old broomsedge field--grown up in pines, sweet gum, persimmon trees and briars. He cleaned out every tree, every stump, every briar.

ANNOUNCER

That gentleman just naturally likes hard work, doesn't he?

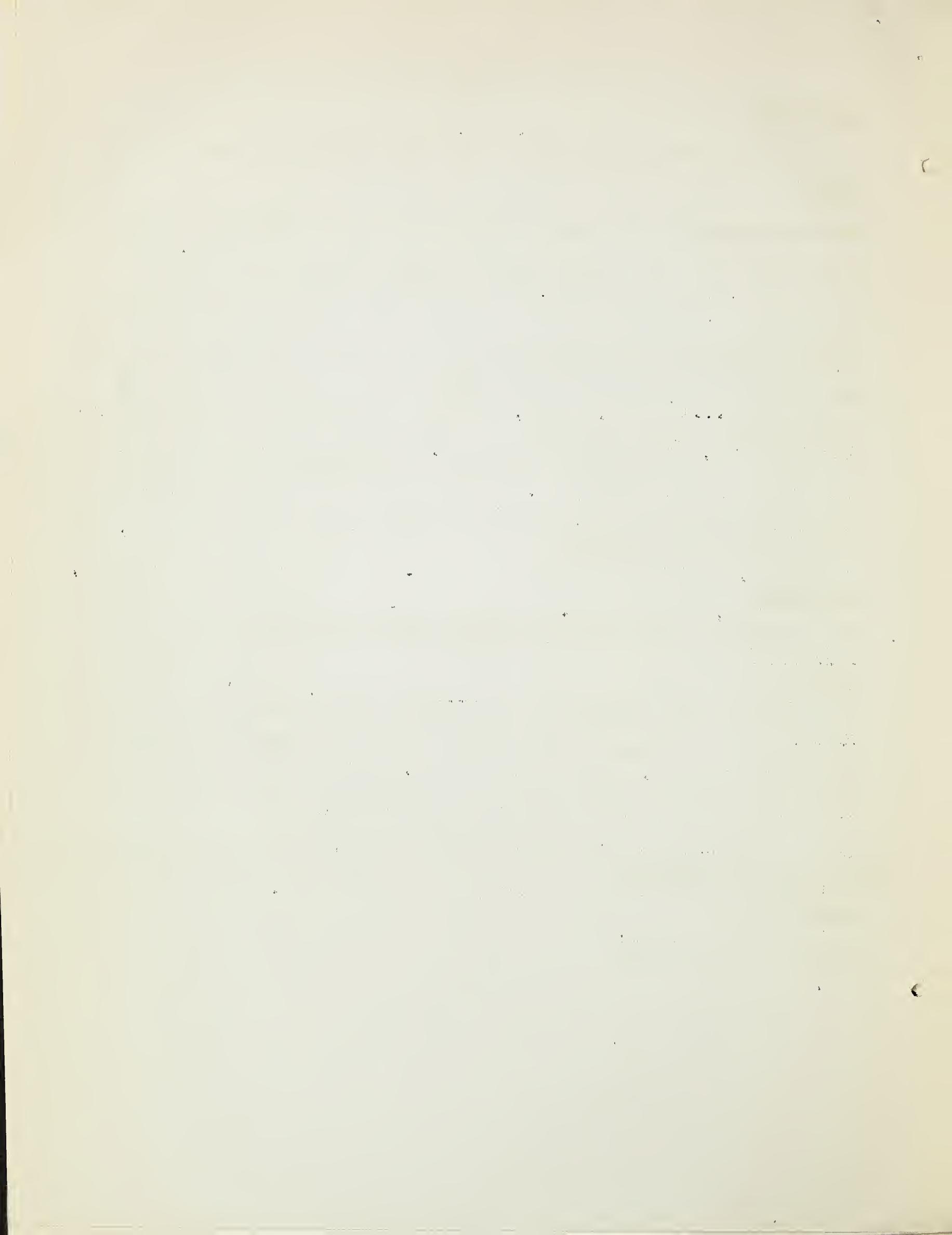
JONES

It had to be done, one way or another. After he'd got rid of the trees and the stumps and the briars he contour-plowed the whole seven acres--before the pasture was phosphated and seeded. Now he's carrying on a real soil-improvement program.

SOUND: Boom of cannon.

ANNOUNCER

This week we salute!



JONES

This week, _____, we salute H. E. Hendricks, extension agronomist of the University of Tennessee for his timely suggestions on winter cover crops. Mr. Hendricks points out that a winter cover crop is just as much a part of the corn or cotton crop as proper land preparation. If row crop farming is to be continued with profitable yields the fertility of the land must be maintained and losses from erosion controlled. This is where winter cover crops fit into the picture; both for this purpose and for pasture and feed. Mr. Hendricks suggests that a large number of cover crop combinations are possible, but lists a few for consideration.

_____ will you oblige by reading his tips?

ANNOUNCER

Okay, Ewing. Mr. Hendricks suggests: After early harvested row crops or fallowed land sow crimson clover, alfalfa, red clover or permanent pasture mixtures. Cut and shock all upland corn for feed and to permit cover crop seedings. On lespedeza stubble, sow ryegrass or prepare land and sow wheat, oats, rye or barley. Prepare land thorough and firm--inoculate legume seed--sow timely and properly--use lime and phosphate materials as insurance for successful and profitable crop.

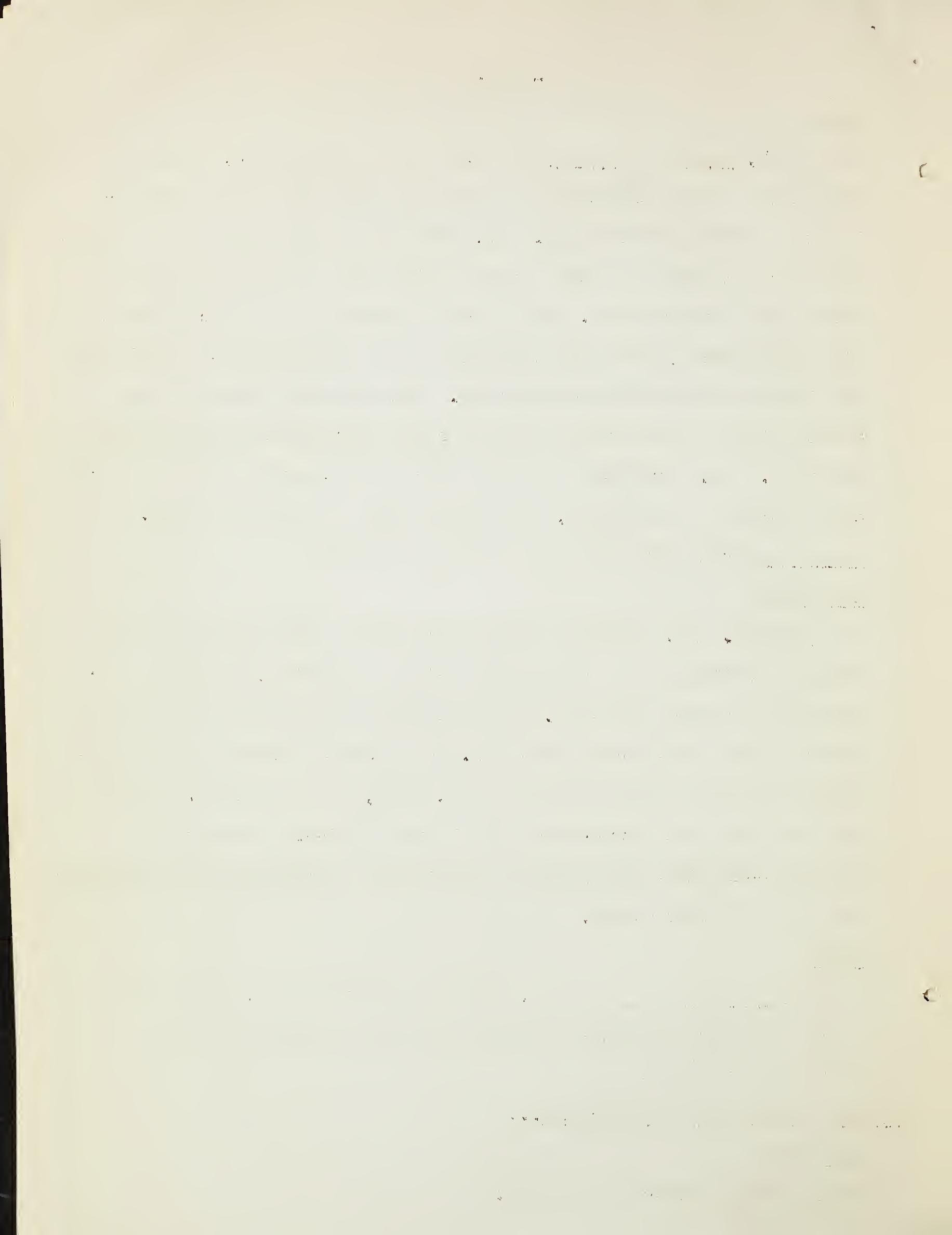
JONES

Thanks, _____. And so a salute to H. E. Hendricks of the Tennessee Extension Service for these helpful hints on winter cover crops.

SOUND: Telegraph key clicking...

ANNOUNCER

News in the conservation world!

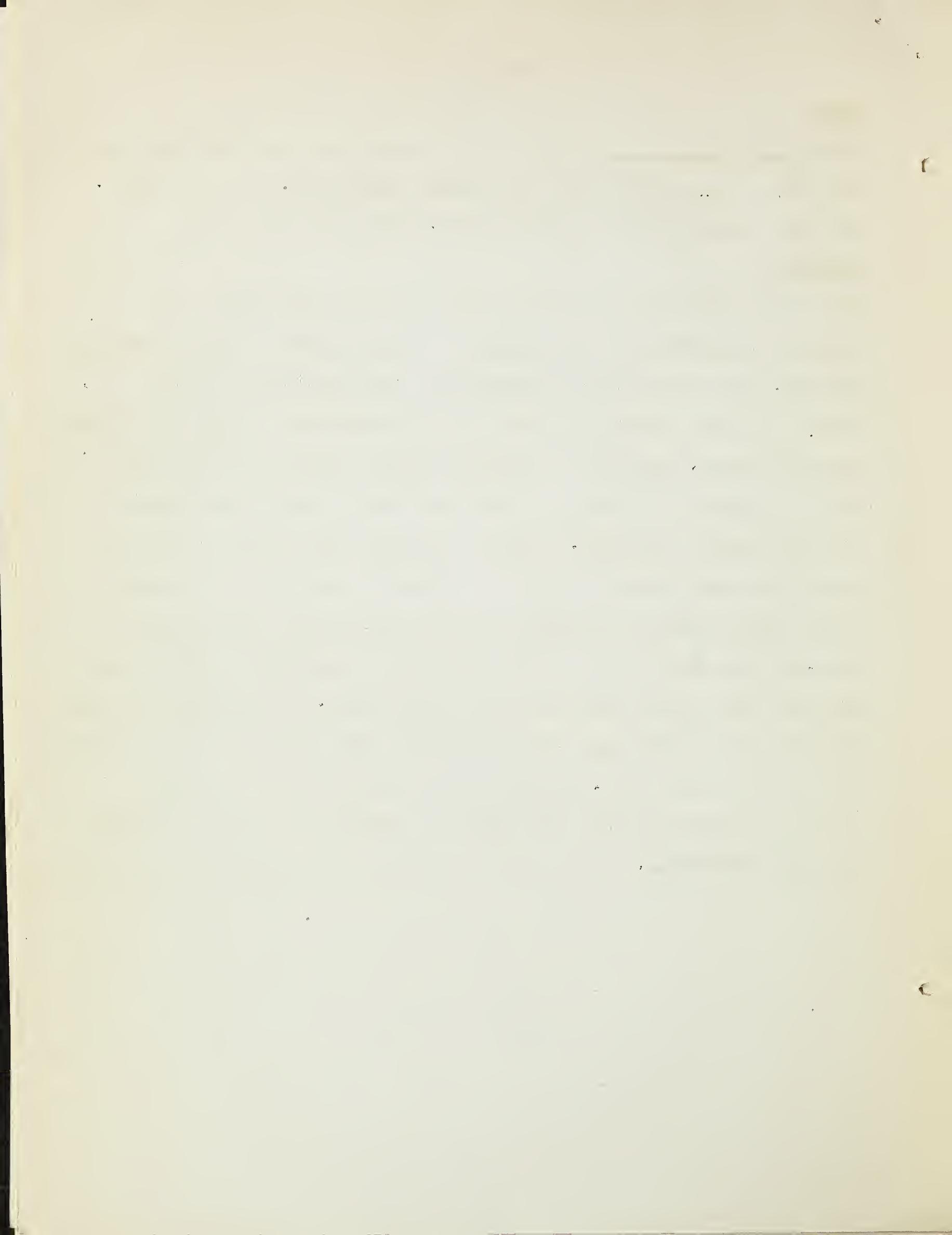


JONES

Well, _____, I have three items here, one from Indiana, one from Ohio, and one from Kentucky. Suppose I hand you this one from Indiana and then I'll wind up with the other two.

ANNOUNCER

All right, here we go on news in the conservation world from Indiana. County Agent John Wylie of Peru, that's in Miami County, has made some interesting measurements from the Wabash River bridge in Peru. When the river is at the 13-foot stage, and that's four feet below the flood level, the river carries away one $\frac{9}{4}$ -acre farm every $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours. Of course, County Agent Wylie points out, this isn't an actual farm in its entirety, but it does represent the equivalent of all the productive soil on one $\frac{9}{4}$ -acre farm. Most of the soil being carried away by the river comes from sloping fields that are in cropland. Mr. Wylie says farmers can stop this huge loss by keeping steep lands in improved pastures or protected woodlands. If they must use the steeper land for crops they can save the soil by using longer rotations and approved fertility measures, terraces, contour cultivation, strip cropping and sod waterways.



JONES

Now it's my turn and I'll make my items short and snappy. Wooster, Ohio: Enrollees of the CCC camp here established 300 acres of forest plantations and 17,000 feet of wildlife food and cover border plantings on 150 farms in recent weeks. Falmouth, Kentucky: D. Barnett Casey, cashier of the Falmouth Deposit bank, is urging Pendleton County farmers to organize a soil conservation district. Mr. Casey says: "The fertility of our soil should be protected for today and for tomorrow just like the resources of a bank. We are mighty careful to protect our bank accounts; let's be just as careful to protect our soil."

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

JONES (on cue)

This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Goodbye until next Saturday, when we'll be back with another story of "Fortunes Washed Away".

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